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ABSTRACT

Successful building-level instructional supervision requires a physical, intellectual, and psychological environment where optimal teaching and learning can occur. While supervisory activities may open the lines of communication between the principal and the teacher, these communication lines may be affected by the perceptions that teachers have of the school climate. In an investigation of the the correlation between Mississippi secondary teachers' perceptions of the principals' supervisory behaviors and their perceptions of the school climate, 240 English, science, mathematics, and social studies teachers completed Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaires (form 1) and School Climate Surveys (form A). The results generally showed that the administrative aspects of the school climate were negatively correlated with directive supervisory practices in the areas of curriculum development, staff development, instructional organization, and program evaluation. Additionally, these four areas were negatively correlated with nondirective administration-related behaviors. A positive correlation, however, did exist between these areas and the perceived collaborative supervisory behaviors of school leaders. (6 references) (KM)

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PRINCIPALS SUPERVISORY BEHAVIOR AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

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Principals Supervisory Behavior and School Climate

Public dissatisfaction has led to legislation in many states requiring increased activity of the principal in instructional supervision. Bellon asserted that since instructional leadership of the principal has been legislated, in order to achieve the purposes of the instructional program, principals have been forced to take on the roles of a clinical supervisor.[1]

Successful supervision of instruction at the building level requires a physical, intellectual, and psychological environment in which optimal teaching and learning can occur. The nature of the school environment influences the ways students develop and learn.

Bellon stated that human endeavor is controlled primarily by one's ability, characteristics, and the environment which exercise both direction and control over the individual efforts. In all human effort, there is the need for each person to assess the nature of his power within the environment in order to determine the best means of achieving his goals. The administrator's purpose is to provide the appropriate stimulation, direction, and processes to facilitate achievement of the purposes of the school program.[2]

Even though these supervisory activities may open the lines of communication between the principal and the teacher, these lines of communication may be affected by the perceptions teachers have of the school climate. Principals should be aware of their personal attitudes and how their interactions with teachers influence subsequent administrative behavior. Gibb asserted that principals should be aware of the ways teachers perceive their overall behavior.[3]

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[1]Jerry J. Bellon, Classroom Supervision and Instructional Improvement: A Synergetic Process (Dubuque, LA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1981), p. 4.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Cecil Gibb, The Handbook of Social Psychology (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), p. 272.

The behavior of the principal, as perceived by teachers, could have an effect on the school climate. Unruh and Turner asserted that supervisory behavior of principals which shows consideration of the needs of teachers, while insisting on discipline and emphasizing achievement of tasks, is more successful in achieving high morale and superior performance of teachers.[4] It seems clear that teachers' perceptions of their principal's behavior influences the school climate.

This study investigated the correlation between secondary teachers' perceptions of the supervisory behaviors of principals and their perceptions of school climate. The population of the study consisted of secondary teachers in Mississippi. The sample was composed of 240 secondary teachers of English, science, mathematics, and social studies.

The Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data were the Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire (SBDQ), Form 1, Subscales 1, 2, 5, and 8, and the School Climate Survey (SCS), Form A.[5] The SBDQ, Form 1, was developed in 1981 by Sistrunk. The instrument measures actual and/or preferred supervisory behaviors. Form 1 of the SBDQ is an ordinal scale which yields a total SBDQ score, three dimensional scores (Directive, Collaborative, and Nondirective), eight subscale scores, and three dimensional scores within each subscale. The SBDQ, Form 1, has an alpha coefficient of .99 for the total score, .92 for the Directive dimension, .89 for the Nondirective dimension, and .93 for the Collaborative dimension. The content validity of the SBDQ, Form 1, was established by Sistrunk through the instrument's firm basis in the theoretical foundation of

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[4]Adolph Unruh and Harold E. Turner, Supervision for Change and Innovation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), p. 15.

[5]Sistrunk, Manual for Administration of SBDQ, p. 1.

supervision. A very careful and complete examination of the literature was completed as the initial step in developing the instrument. Utilization of two steps of the Delphi technique increased the content validity of the instrument. Construct validity was developed by use of factor analysis which was done three times for the instrument.

The SBDQ, Form 1, was first normed by Sistrunk.[6] Ngugi renormed the SBDQ, Form 1, in her study. Higher alpha coefficients were obtained because of the larger number of subjects.[7]

Four instruments for measurement of climate were developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Three of these instruments measure satisfaction, which is the personal, affective responses of an individual to a specific situation or condition. The three instruments for measurement of satisfaction were (1) the NASSP Student Satisfaction Survey; (2) the NASSP Teacher Satisfaction Survey, and (3) the NASSP Parent Satisfaction Survey. After initial development and field tests, all three instruments were subjected to a national pilot study and a subsequent national normative study. The fourth instrument, the NASSP School Climate Survey was developed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This item bank was generated from a comprehensive review of both the climate and effective schools literature and an analysis of existing climate instruments used by both researchers and practitioners.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) asserted that the School Climate Survey, as an instrument, represents shared perceptions of principals about the characteristics of an organization and its members.

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[6]Sistrunk, Manual for Administration of SBDQ.

[7]Ngugi, "Relationship Between Principals' Perceptions and Teachers' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Supervisory Behaviors," p. 86.

Unlike measures of satisfaction in which each individual, as a respondent, is asked to give a personal reaction, climate is measured by asking each individual to serve as a participant and to respond to each item according to what he or she believes most people hold to be true about that characteristic of the school's environment.[8]

The SCS was administered to more than 1500 teachers during the national pilot and normative studies in 1985. The instrument's alpha coefficient for the climate subscales was found to have a range from 0.73 to 0.87. The items designed to measure school climate were listed at random for purposes of exploratory factor analysis. Both empirical data from the pilot studies and a Delphi technique were used in the formulation of subsequent drafts of the instrument. Construct validity of the SCS is an indicator of how well the instrument measures school climate.[9]

In the pilot study, climate items were listed at random for purposes of exploratory factor analysis. Redundant and ambiguous items were revised or excluded. Pilot testing of the instrument offered several opportunities for input and feedback from school personnel. Empirical data from the field study and rational considerations guided the formulation of subsequent drafts of the instrument. During the development of the instrument, the task force placed great emphasis on scale and item conceptualizations in order to support strong construct validity.

Task force members produced position papers and reviews of instrumentation keyed to the pertinent variables of the interactive model of the school environment. Extensive use of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in field testing the instruments ensured that only concepts and items with strong factor

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[8]NASSP, Manual for Administration of the SCS, p. 1.

[9]NASSP, Manuel for Asministration of the SCS.

loadings were retained. These analyses confirmed the conceptualization of the scales and guided the revision of the instruments. Task force review and factor analyses both support a strong construct validity for the climate and satisfaction instruments.

Findings

Question one sought to determine if there were correlations significantly different from zero between the perceptions of secondary teachers relative to the Directive, Collaborative, or Nondirective dimension of their supervisors' behaviors as measured by teachers' responses to Subscale 1, Developing Curriculum, of the SBDQ, Form 1, and to the SCS, Form A. A significant correlation was found between the total score of Subscale 1, Curriculum Development, of the SBDQ and the factors of Teacher-Student Relationships and Administration of the SCS.

Teacher-Student Relationships was the only factor of the SCS found to correlate significantly with the Directive dimension of Subscale 1, Curriculum Development, of the SBDQ. Administration and Teacher-Student Relationships, as factors of the SCS, both correlated significantly with the Collaborative dimension of Subscale 1, Curriculum Development, of the SBDQ. The Nondirective dimension of Subscale 1, Curriculum Development, of the SBDQ, correlated significantly with three factors of the SCS. These three factors were Administration, Guidance, and Parent/Community/School Relationships. None of the other factors of the SCS had significant correlations with Subscale 1 of the SBDQ or any of its three dimensions. In this correlation, Administration was found to be negatively correlated with Directive supervisory behavior.

Question two sought to determine if there were correlations significantly different from zero between the perceptions of secondary teachers relative

to the Directive, Collaborative, or Nondirective dimension of their supervisors' behavior as measured by teachers' responses to Subscale 2, Instructional Organization, of the SBDQ, Form 1, and to the SCS, Form A. Only Administration, as a factor of the SCS, was found to correlate significantly with the total score of Subscale 2, Instructional Organization, of the SBDQ.

The Directive dimension of Subscale 2, Instructional Organization, of the SBDQ, correlated significantly with Teacher-Student Relationships as a factor of the SCS. The Collaborative dimension of Subscale 2, Instructional Organization, of the SBDQ, correlated significantly with Teacher-Student Relationships and Parent/Community/School Relationships as factors of the SCS. Administration was the only factor of the SCS that had a significant correlation with the Nondirective dimension of Subscale 2, Instructional Organization, of the SBDQ. None of the other factors of the SCS had significant correlations with Subscale 2 of the SBDQ or any of its three dimensions.

Question three sought to determine if there were correlations significantly different from zero between the perceptions of secondary teachers relative to the Directive, Collaborative, or Nondirective Dimension of their supervisors' behaviors as measured by teachers' responses to Subscale 5, Staff Development, of the SBDQ, Form 1, and to the SCS, Form A. There was a significant correlation between the total score of Subscale 5, Staff Development, and the factor of Administration of the SCS.

There was a significant correlation between the factor of Administration, of the SCS, and the Directive dimension of Subscale 5, Staff Development, of the SBDQ. Parent/Community/School Relationships was the only factor of the SCS that had a significant correlation with the Collaborative dimension of Subscale 5, Staff Development, of the SBDQ. Two factors of the SCS, Administration and Parent/Community/School Relationships were correlated significantly

with the Nondirective dimension of Subscale 5, Staff Development, of the SBDQ. Other factors of the SCS were not significantly correlated with Subscale 5, Staff Development, of the SBDQ or any of its three dimensions.

Question four sought to determine if there were correlations significantly different from zero between the perceptions of secondary teachers relative to the Directive, Collaborative, or Nondirective dimension of their supervisors' behaviors as measured by teachers' responses to Subscale 8, Evaluation of Instruction, of the SBDQ, Form 1, and to the SCS, Form A. Administration was the only factor of the SCS that correlated significantly with the total score of Subscale 8, Evaluation of Instruction, of the SBDQ.

Direction, as a dimension of Subscale 8, Evaluation of Instruction, of the SBDQ, did not correlate significantly with any of the factors of the SCS. Parent/Community/School Relationships and Instructional Management were the two factors of the SCS that correlated significantly with the Collaborative dimension of Subscale 8, Evaluation of Instruction, of the SBDQ. Nondirection, as a dimension of Subscale 8, was significantly correlated with the factor of Administration of the SCS. None of the other factors of the SCS were significantly correlated with Subscale 8, Evaluating Instruction, or any of its three dimensions.

Question five sought to determine if there were correlations significantly different from zero between secondary teachers' perceptions of the supervisory behavior of principals and the school climate as measured by teachers' responses to the SBDQ, Form 1, Subscales 1, 2, 5, and 8, total subscale scores, and/or each subscale's dimensional scores, and their responses to the SCS, Form A, when the demographic variables of race, gender, or subject taught were considered. When the differences in correlations between supervisory behaviors and school climate for males and females were considered, there were no

significant differences. No significant differences were found in the correlation between supervisory behavior and school climate for teachers from different subject areas. There was a significant difference when Subscale 1, Curriculum Development, of the SBDQ was negatively correlated between the two race groups. NonCaucasians responded negatively while Caucasians responded positively when curriculum development was correlated between supervisory behavior and school climate.

Summary

In general, these data showed that the Administrative aspects of the school climate were negatively correlated with Directive supervisory practices in the areas of Curriculum Development, Staff Development, Organization for Instruction, and Program Evaluation. This same subscale was also correlated negatively with all four of the SBDQ scales related to Nondirective Administration behaviors. They all, however, correlated positively with perceived collaborative supervisory behavior of school leaders.

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